

PRESS RELEASE

Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

**Fourteenth District, Michigan
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

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**CONYERS HAILS COURT VICTORY IN HADDAD CASE:
"A TRIUMPH FOR OPEN AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT"**

Today, in a strongly worded, landmark opinion, the United States Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the Detroit Free Press, Congressman John Conyers, Jr. (Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee), and other litigants, and against the Department of Justice. The Department had contended that it could hold secret proceedings against Rabih Haddad, who has been held for over nine months without charges being filed. Conyers issued the following statement:

"This ruling is a triumph for open and accountable government and a slap at the Bush Administration's attempts to hold itself above our Constitution. The Court found that the First Amendment above all else protects the public's right to know and cannot be overridden to shield John Ashcroft from embarrassment. He should be ashamed that an unknown number of our fellow Americans are being held in secret, away from their loved ones and legal representatives, and without charges being filed.

This case, coupled with the Justice Department's random interviews of Arab Americans and Muslim Americans in my district and incidents like these around the nation, has made me concerned that the hunt for terrorists has careened into an unfocused fishing expedition with untold impacts on the innocent and on the sanctity of our Constitution."

Among the language in the strongly worded, landmark opinion, authored by Sixth Circuit Judge Damon J. Keith, is the following:

"Today, the Executive Branch seeks to take this safeguard away from the public by placing its actions beyond public scrutiny. Against non-citizens, it seeks the power to secretly deport a class if it unilaterally calls them 'special interest' cases. The Executive Branch seeks to uproot people's lives, outside the public eye, and behind a closed door. Democracies die behind closed doors. The First Amendment, through a free press, protects the people's right to know that their government acts fairly, lawfully, and accurately in deportation proceedings. When government begins closing doors, it selectively controls information rightfully belonging to the people. Selective information is misinformation. The Framers of the First Amendment 'did not trust any government to separate the true from the false for us.' *Kleindienst v. Mandel*, 408 U.S. 753, 773 (1972)."